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**Shuster, W. Morgan.** *The Strangling of Persia.* Pp. lxiii, 423. Price \$2.50. New York: The Century Company, 1912.

Russian interests and British trade explain the passing of Persian nationality. Mr. Shuster's account of his personal experiences as treasurer-general of Persia is an absorbing recital of the eighteenth century methods used by Russia and to a lesser degree by England to assure that Persia's efforts for her financial regeneration should fail. Though the appointment of the group of Americans who were asked to help lift Persia out of the slough of impending bankruptcy and partition was not one backed officially by the United States their departure, work and failure made Persia an object of American interest to a degree never before known. The net of local intrigue, treachery and foreign diplomacy of the Machiavellian order which the author details, shows that the partition of Poland has its twentieth century counterparts. Morocco, Tripoli and Persia, three Mohammedan states, are vanishing under the pretense of the needs of civilization championed by four of the great Christian powers. In the case of Persia the author shows the claim to be the merest pretense. The struggle for a constitution, the reaching out for self-government, the earnest efforts for abolition of official dishonesty, for taxation reform and efficient protection of property made by the Progressive party of Persia showed that the ancient empire had heard the call of the twentieth century and was determined to make for itself an independent place in the world's affairs. But this very advance made Persia dangerous to her powerful neighbors. Russia especially saw in the present weakness of Persia and in the strained relations of England and Germany the opportunity to take one step more in her approach to the Persian Gulf. In these days of the Hague Court and arbitration treaties such incidents as the recent diplomatic moves of Russia in Persia furnish a cynical comment on the depth of our boasted accomplishments in insuring justice and fair dealing among nations.

Except for the failure of the plans of the Americans through foreign interference, Mr. Shuster's account is one of brilliant achievement. To have been able in a short period of less than a year to put down a civil war of dangerous proportions, to reform one of the most corrupt systems of public finance which the world has known, and to change a chronic treasury deficit into a credit balance of almost a million dollars, is a signal evidence not only of Persia's earnestness in reform but of the ability of those whom she called to her aid.

CHESTER LLOYD JONES.

*University of Wisconsin.*

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**Simons, A. M.** *Social Forces in American History.* Pp. xiii, 325. Price \$1.50. New York: Macmillan Company, 1911.

It is extremely gratifying to social students that the interpretation of history is claiming the attention of so many writers of the present day.

The dynamic forces of civilization reside in the underlying social and economic conditions. Individuals who have been forced to the front by these conditions and who are the direct product of them have been given undue prominence as history makers. The greater and more important task of tracing the motive forces behind men and movements is, at least, now being undertaken seriously.